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ABSTRACT

Three studies were conducted to investigate stereotypes of men of various hair colors by middle-class Anglo college students. Study 1 found an increase of perceived blondness with status, while lack of status was associated with red hair. Study 2, using semantic differentials (after Osgood), found blonde males to be significantly more beautiful, active, strong, pleasant, clean, sharp, powerful, rich and successful than red-headed males. The redheaded male concept clustered together with concepts of sick, scum and fool, and was closer to the concept of janitor and further from the concept of doctor than the blond on the dimensions of potency and likeability. Study 3 rated blond, dark haired Anglos, redheaded, Negro, Chicano, and American Indian males. Rated as most beautiful to least beautiful in order were blond, dark, Negro, Chicano, Indian and then redhead. Indian, Negro and Chicano males were not rated as successful as redheads who were rated as less successful than blonds and dark haired Anglo males. The findings indicate a stereotyping, at least with Anglos, of a strong, successful, intelligent, good-looking blond male. Redheaded males are seen as less attractive, less intelligent, masculine, and successful. The findings can be summed up by the title that the redheaded findings have begun to be called by the researchers; the 'Bozo Effect' after a favorite clown. (Author)

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Blond is Beautiful:

Status & Preference by Hair Color

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Presented at the
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Phoenix, Arizona

Clowns, simple country folk, Howdy Doody and other dummies are portrayed as having red hair. Redheads are not tall-dark-and-handsome; unlike Steve Canyon they win neither the girl nor the glory in typical portrayals.

The following studies were conducted to investigate the possibility of stereotyping with hair color and its relationship to status and preference.

Study 1 was conducted using 31 college students, all Anglo-Saxons, in three separate classes to determine how reported status influenced person perception. The subjects in the three classes were exposed to a stimulus person under similar situations, but each group was told that the stimulus person had a different status, ranging from college professor to student janitor. Later each student filled out a questionnaire about the characteristics of the stimulus person. Status was found to have a large effect on reported hair color. The professor was perceived by 62% of the subjects as having blond hair, 15% reported red hair, and the remainder reported either brown or black hair. The student janitor was perceived by 10% of the subjects as having blond hair, 60% as having red hair. The stimulus person was strawberry blond with a flaming red mustache.

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Study 2 used 50 Anglo subjects from two different educational institutions (12 nursing students from U.T.C. and 38 undergraduates from BYU). Each subject completed a semantic differential (after Osgood) on 12 concepts. The concepts of interest were: three professions (medical doctor, professor, and janitor); two hair colors (blond and red, both male); three reference concepts (me, feminine, fool); and the concepts God and scum to establish a reference dipole. The means of the semantic pairs were then factor analyzed. After rotation, the 12 concepts were located in an Euclidean space defined by the factors of potency (power), likeability (evaluative), and physical activity (see Figures 1 & 2). Geometric distances were then calculated between concepts. To establish clusters of concepts with statistical meaning, the distance matrix was linearly transformed into a pseudo-correlation matrix and factor analyzed; the resulting factors represent clusters of concepts.

A partial review of the results indicate that the blond males are significantly ($p < 0.01$) more beautiful, aggressive, active, strong, fast, pleasant, clean, sharp, powerful, rich, and successful than are redheaded males. On 42% of the responses, blond males were found to be similar to the concept 'me', only on 8% of the responses were the redheaded males found to be similar to the same concept. On two axis of potency and likeability, the redhead was found closer to janitor and fool, and further from doctor than the blond. With nursing students, the doctor was found closest to God. The concepts of blond male, me, God, and janitor clustered together. Professor, doctor, and me constituted a second cluster. Redheaded males were clustered together with the concepts of sick, scum, and fool.

Study 3 used 14 subjects of mixed European, Latin and Anglo backgrounds. The subjects filled out identical forms as in Study 2, except the concepts were blond, dark haired (Anglo), redheaded, Negro, Chicano, and American Indian (all males). Rated as most beautiful to least beautiful in order were blond, dark, Negro, Chicano, Indian, and then redhead. Blonds, dark (Anglo), and Negro men were rated significantly more beautiful than redheads. Other findings: strong to weak in order; Negro, Indian, dark (Anglo), blond, Chicano, and then redhead; masculine to feminine in order; Negro, dark (Anglo), Indian, Chicano, blond, and then redhead. Indian, Negro and Chicano males were not rated as successful as redheads who were rated as less successful than blonds and dark haired Anglo males. A factor analysis indicated that the concepts were not being separated by a minority-nonminority concept, but more appropriately on a light-dark continuum.

These findings indicate a stereotyping, at least with Anglos, of a strong, successful, intelligent, good-looking blond male. Redheaded males are seen as less attractive, less intelligent, masculine, and successful. The findings can be summed up by the title that the redheaded findings have begun to be called by the researchers; the 'Bozo Effect' after a favorite clown.

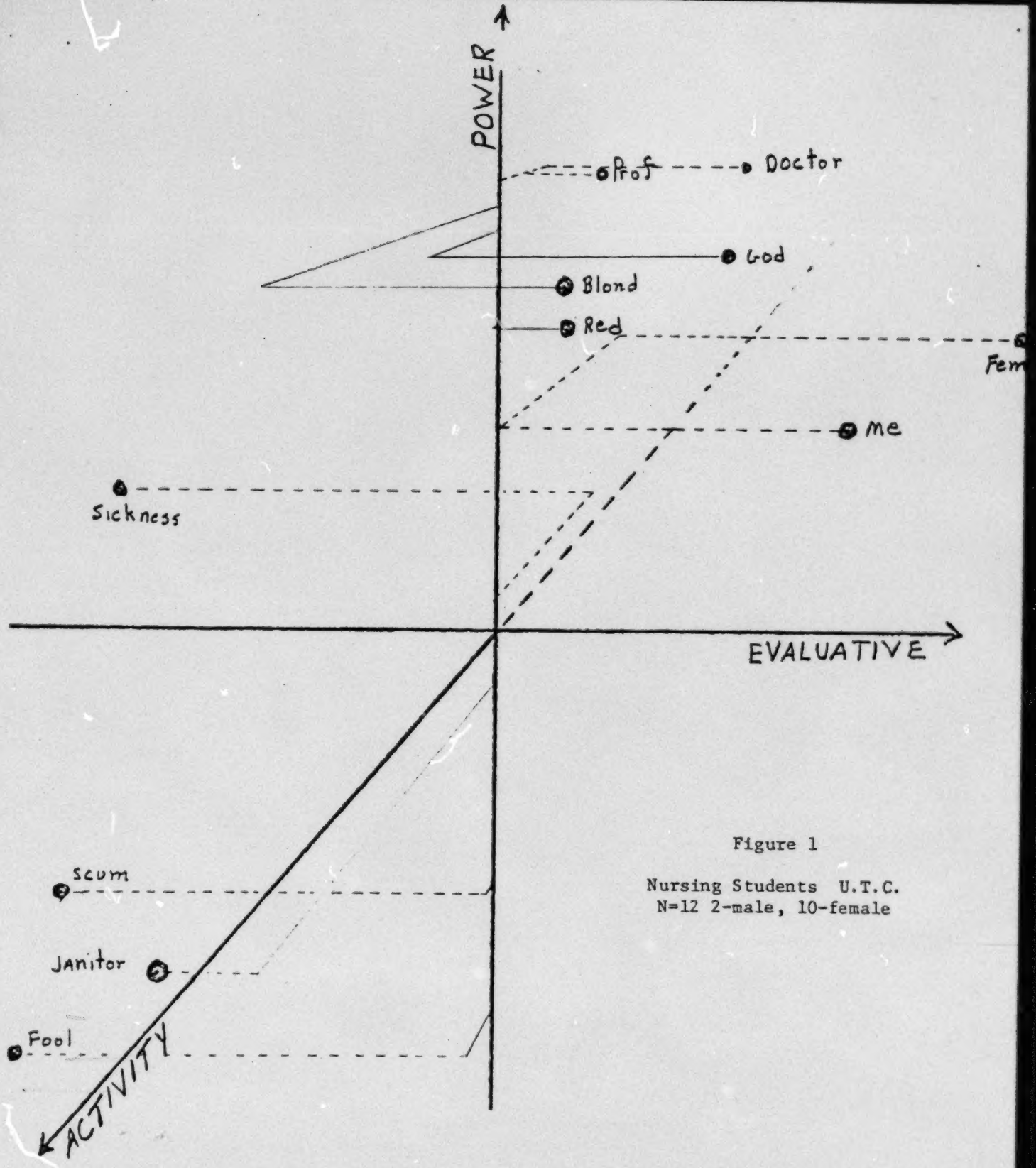

Figure 1

Nursing Students U.T.C.
N=12 2-male, 10-female

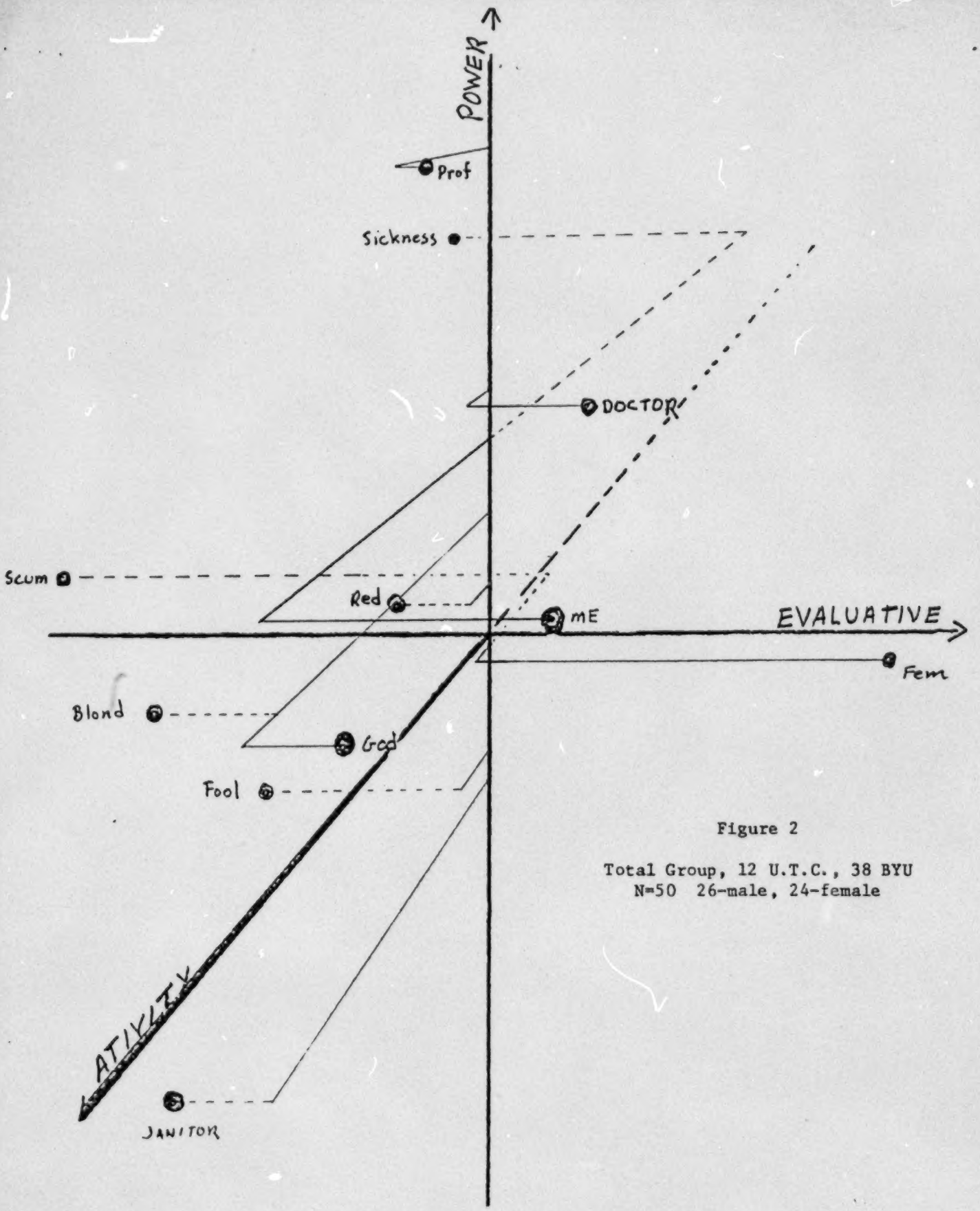

Figure 2

Total Group, 12 U.T.C., 38 BYU
N=50 26-male, 24-female